(c) whether the Central Disinvestment Commission has gone to the extent of resignation or eventual retirement of its members and Chairman ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY) : (a) In its 12 reports submitted so far, the Disinvestment Commission has given its recommendations in respect of 58 PSUs. Action on all of these recommendations has been initiated. Action on the recommendations of the Disinvestment Commission is taken as per a prescribed procedure involving Consultations with the concerned Departments/ Ministries at various levels. After considering the Commission's recommendations, Government held equity in GAIL CONCOR, MTNL and Modern Food Industries Ltd. has been partially disinvested.

(b) Disinvestment is a continuing process. Since disinvestment is done keeping in view the market conditions and after detailed examination of the recommendations in consultation with concerned departments; no time frame for disinvestment in other PSUs recommended by the Commission can be indicated.

(c) The terms of the Chairman and members of the Disinvestment Commission have expired.

Setting up of Disinvestment Panel

*414. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of DISINVESTMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government do not want to set up another disinvestment panel; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN JAITELY) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Items Shifted to OGL

*415. SHRI BRAHMA KUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of items shifted to OGL;

(b) the number of items which have small angle;

(c) the reasons for transferring them to SSIs; and

(d) the steps taken to safeguard the interest of SSIs?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) to (d) Import restrictions on 714 tariff lines, at 8 digit level, were removed on 31-3-2000. Out of these 58 tariff lines are of interest to small scale Industries. Import restrictions on these 58 tariff lines have been removed as part of our International obligations. However all imports in the country are subject to applicable rates of custom duties.

Government is aware of the emerging scenario for the SSI Units and has taken several steps to help them become globally competitive. These include special focus on areas such as technology up-gradation, infrastructure assistance through the cluster approach, timely availability of credit, adoption of modern management practices, use of electronic infrastructure, marketing and timely information dissemination, including sensitization of small industries to the emerging challenges of trade liberalization.

The government also proposes to take following specific steps for helping the SSI Units :

(1) A scheme of credit guarantee is being launched shortly, for which a provision of Rs. 100 Crores has been made in the Budget for the year 2000-2001.

(2) In the Union Budget 2000-2001 the operation of the special scheme called the Technology Development and Modernisation Fund of the Small Industries' Development Bank of India (SIDBI), is proposed to be extended by another three years.

(3) The Ministry of Small Scale Industries and Agro and Rural Industries is planning to introduce a scheme of interest support to small scale entrepreneurs going in for technology up-gradation and modernisation.

(4) In the amendments to the Export and Import Policy, announced on 31-3-2000 Export Promotion Capital Goods Scheme has been liberalised to include SSI Sector, which now can import capital goods required for export production at the concessional duty rate of 5%.